A Proclamation,

PVBLISHED BY THE HIGH AND MIGHTIE PRINCE ELECTOR IOHN SIGISMOND

Marqueſſe of Brandenburgh, the foure and *twentieth day of February* Anno 1614.

Prohibiting all maner of Scandalls and Calumniations to be vſed by the Clergie, in the Pulpit or elſe-where, throughout his Prouinces and Dominions: commanding to preach only the true word of God to the edification of his Subiects.

Tranſlated faithfully out of the high-Dutch Copy.

By MICH. VANDERSTEGEN.

AT LONDON
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1614.

A Proclamation,

Published by the high and mightie Prince Elector, Iohn Sigismond, Marquesse of Brandenburgh, the foure and twentieth day of February. Anno 1614.

WE IOHN SIGISMOND by the grace of GOD, Marquesse of Brandenburgh, Arch-Chamberlaine of the sacred Roman Empire, and Prince Elector, Duke in Prussia, of Gulyke, Cleue, Berg, Stretin, Pomern, of the Cassubians & Wandals; alsso in Silesia, of Crossen and Jegerndorff: Earle of Hohenzoller, Marquesse of Nurnberg, Prince of Rugen, Earle of Marke and Ravensberg, Lord of Ravenstein. To our beeloued and trustie, the most reuerend religious, high, noble learned and honored, all and singular, generall and speciall Su-

Superintendants, Prelates, Ouerseers, Parish Priests: And in generall, To all Ministers of the Church vnder our Dominions, of the Electorate and Marquesate of Brandenburg, on this and the other side of the Riuer of Oder, doe send our greeting; And besides we doe declare and let them know, That godly and Religious Princes, Soueraignes, and Magistrates in all Countries, and at all times haue considered properly to belong to their high places, offices, and charges to looke vnto subordinate causes, and to endeuor themselues, That all the vnneedfull and friuolous contentions and disputations in the Pulpits, and all calumniations and comminations may be abolished, put downe, and taken away out of the Church, but especially such as stifle, and ouer-boldly doe vndertake the same, and contrary to all Christian loue and charity, arrogantly doe eyther assume or presume authority, to censure, taxe, and pronounce for Heretickes, yea and wholly to disallow and condemne other churches within and without the Empire (ouer which they haue not any charge to command or censure) not only with vnseemly sharp and bitter words, but also with all kinde of notable and malicious surnames and slaunders, whereby the common people is not onely scandalized, and the Church preiudiced: But the edification thereof is also apparently hindered.

And to omit and leaue all ancient examples and presidents of other Princes, That haue

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beene carefull and prouident to take order for all such trifling and friuolous contentions and disputations in the Pulpits or else where, wee finde a commendable Example, and Memorial of the late excellent prince Elector, Augustus of Saxonia, in the yeare of our Lord God 1566. and of the Dukes also of Brownswicke and Lunenburg, in the yeare of our Lord 1562. in the name of the common and generall churches of lowe Saxonia. Likewise the prince Elector Christian the first of Saxonia, and Duke Ioachim Fredericke at Liguitz and Brieg, in the yeare 1601. Princes of famous memory haue left behind them this most commendable Example to immitate them. And not onely the aforesaid Presidents haue moued vs heereunto, but also amongst others this is not the least; That we haue had conference with other Electors princes, and States, (howbeit there are very many amongst them, that do profesle M. Luthers doctrine, yet we are agreed together) That in our countries and dominions also should be taken such order and prouision, that there might euery way bee vsed and obserued all discretion and moderation by the Clergie in the Pulpits, and other publike assemblies: For to shun and auoyd all scandall, perturbation, or rather an intrication of consciences, and prejudice to the Church. Therefore euery man may easily perceiue and consider, what griefe it hath beene vnto vs. That now a reasonable long time, there hath by some of you (for in generall I can not

not accuse you) and finely by such as are induced and entited thereunto, not out of a Speciall zeale towards the truth of GOD, but rather out of ambition, arrogancie and pride, yet they could say and speake the least to it, if it should come to a triall, or else, if they could but get a little gaine by it, they would turne quite papists, because that they seeke rather to be praised by men then God; beene bled without all shame and feare, to many acclamations, condemnations, slanderings, thunderings, and reproachings, and at many times little regarding whether they bring forth the truth or untruth, or whether it be fitting or not fitting in the pulpit, but onely to discomfort true Christians, and to make them grieue at it, when they in cooling their stomaches doe powre out their gall and venime, and make the Jesuites and Papists (our common and publique enemies) reioyce at it, and make a laughing stocke of vs; besides this, they doe heere withall, but heape vpon themselues, and vpon their Auditors, the anger and wrath of God. For the holy Scripture teacheth vs quite otherwise, not willing that they that are united, and agreed with vs in the true grounds of faith and religion, and constantly and faithfully beleeue onely to be saued by and through GOD his mercy, & the most precious merits of our only redeemer, Mediator and Sauiour Jesus Christ, excluding and putting away all other Mediators and helpers, should either haue any pretence of disturbance

ſturbance of conſcience, or receiue other wrongs by publique ſcandals and calumniations, nor ſuch as doe with vs alſo plant forth Chriſt his Goſpel, and ſtiffely fight for the ſame, and for the Goſpels ſake, yet haue they ſuſtained and ſuffred of the Pope and his followers (common enemies of our true Religion) many innumerable perſecutions, and doe daily ſuſtaine and ſuffer them ſtill, yea they haue very often with a ſpeciall courage and magnanimity, gladly ſpent their bloods for the Goſpels ſake, then why ſhould they bee excluded and ſeperated out and from the Chriſtian Communion? Moreouer, the Scripture doth very earneſtly commaund vs: That all matters in controuerſie and in queſtion ſhould not be rebuked, reproued, and contradicted by friuolous wordes, and ſlander, (which is the proper nature of the Diuell) nor by heare-ſaying, and falſe witneſſes, nor in malicious and deteſtable manner, but out of meere ground of the word of God. The Scripture commandeth moreouer, that it ſhall bee done and performed with Chriſtian loue, and a meeke ſpirit, with friendſhip, patience, and with hartie compaſſion of thoſe that be in error, and not with contentious, ſlanderous, and iniurious wordes to the vndoing and deſtruction of the erroneous. Therefore euery one can iudge by himſelfe, how farre theſe thundering exclaimers, aboue mentioned, doe deſtray from the right way, and what inſupportable iudgement in the end ſhall come vpon them that doe

indeuor themselues to rule much more ouer the consciences of man, then to further and increase the Church of God with good examples.

And forasmuch as it belongeth vnto vs, as Soueraigne of these countries, by God appointed to follow and vse our office according vnto the first and the second Table of the ten Commandements of God; and because we will not make our selues partakers of such heauie sins: Therefore we doe statute, ordaine, and command (howbeit many of you are already personally admonished thereof, although little by you regarded,) That yee hereafter shall indeuor your selues to preach and teach to the congregation and flocke committed to your seueral charges, the pure and cleare word of GOD, out of the Scriptures, of the Prophets, and Apostles, out of the foure captitall Symboles or Creedes, out of the reformed confession of Augspurg and the Apologie thereof, and without any depravation and falsifying of the Scriptures, as also without the formular glosses of new Doctrine, which some lazie, curious, and prowd Theologians haue deuised and forged amongst themselues, to obtaine therewith the primatie in the Church and Secular power to themselues, ye shall teach therefore and instruct the people with the pure word of God: For you shall draw more soules to the church of Christ, in seeking only the honor and glory of God, and the saluation of the people. And to the contrarie, you shal leave and shunne all railing, slande-

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ring, curling, and banning other Churches that are not committed to your charges, and which as yet neuer were convicted of anie errour by their due confession. For we cannot for conscience sake, longer abide and be silent vnto the same, and therefore if wee doe heare and perceiue, That one or more amongst you (whosoeuer hee or they bee, none excepted) that shall hereafter contemptuously transgresse this our earnest and straight Edict, being conformable to the word of God, they may certainely assure themselues, that they shall be sent for forthwith to appeare at the Court, and there in our behalfe to be heard, and our meaning proponnded vnto them. And if we then yet cannot perceiue amendment in them, that he or they shall be put out of their place and office, and dismissed the same. Likewise they there shall be proceeded against with due iustice, and seueritie of the Law that being sent for, will not appeare, that they may bee brought to obedience: And wee doe admit and grant, and it is not against our will and pleasure, that if there be any zealous and cutious among them that shall thinke their consciences to bee too straightly and narrowly charged with this our Christianlike and well-minded Edict and Proclamation, that they may prouide themselues otherwise with our full and free liberty and consent, and depart out of our Dominions, and take their residence in such places where such vnchristian contentions, railings, calumniations, slandering, cursing,

sing, and banning other Christians and their co-members may be permitted and allowed vnto to them: For which they may expect in time of God Almightie their reward. Moreouer, we do statute, and our will and pleasure is, That if any of our Clergie for obeying this our Edict & commaund should be invaded by other peace-hating people, and provoked and entised to enter into dispute with them by preaching or writing. That they to the contrary shall not commence nor beginne any thing without our speciall privitie, consent and leave, much lesse to make any strife amongst them, but rather shall bee contented by the testimony and witnes of his conscience, and that he or they are innocent and vnguilty to the actions and doings pretended by other vnquiet spirites. And we doe not doubt, That as we haue publikely proclaimed and openly published vnto all men this our Edict or Proclamation by induction of the word of God, onely to the end to procure, establish and further the peace, quietnes, vnitie, and edification of the Church in those Countries which are by the Almightie GOD committed vnto vs in these last and very dangerous days, wherein the Roman Antichrist thirsteth more, then before, after the blood of true Christians. That also euery one amongst you will be diligent, and indeuour themselues to maintaine peace, and vnitie, to auoyd all scandalls, and to shew their duetifull obedience, considering the commaund of the Apostle Paul, whereby hee doth

doth admonish and exhort euery one to be obedient to their Soueraignes and Magistrates, and that yee may know that they doe not beare the sword for nothing, and in vaine, and that yee doe not moue vs to displeasure or indignation, or to vse against you the streight and sharp course of the Lawe. And hereby you shall fullfill our gracious, and likewise finall will, and good meaning, which towards you (vpon sure confidence of duetifull acknowledgement and obedience) we will be alwayes willing and ready to make manifest. In witnesse whereof wee haue commanded our Signet to be heereupon imprinted. Dated at our Court at Colln vpon the Riuer of Spree the 24. day of the moneth of Februarij 1614.